

# FINAL BILL REPORT

## SSB 5447

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C 479 L 07  
Synopsis as Enacted

**Brief Description:** Regarding the coastal Dungeness crab fishery.

**Sponsors:** Senate Committee on Natural Resources, Ocean & Recreation (originally sponsored by Senators Hatfield, Jacobsen, Honeyford, Hargrove, Poulsen, Benton and Rasmussen).

**Senate Committee on Natural Resources, Ocean & Recreation**  
**House Committee on Agriculture & Natural Resources**  
**House Committee on Appropriations**

**Background:** Dungeness crab exists in commercial quantities from Alaska to central California. These crabs live in waters from the intertidal zone out to a depth of 170 meters. The coastal Dungeness crab fishery is one of the most valuable commercial fisheries in Washington State. The 2004-2005 season saw a record catch of 21 million pounds, with an ex-vessel value of over \$30 million.

Unlike many coastal fisheries which are operated under federal management plans, Congress has authorized Washington, Oregon, and California to manage, with some limitations, the coastal crab fishery in federal waters.

The Legislature and Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW) have taken measures to limit the growth of this fishery, including limiting entry into the fishery, imposing limitations on the number of pots that may be fished, limiting vessel size and transfers, and pursuing interstate agreements.

**Summary:** DFW must develop a proposed coastal crab fishery buyback program (program). The proposed program must provide for the purchase and permanent retirement of coastal Dungeness crab licenses. DFW must design this portion of the program with the goal of purchasing between 80 and 100 licenses. The proposed program may also provide for the purchase or retirement of vessels.

The proposed program must explore funding alternatives that involve federal funding, state funding, industry funding, and combinations of these sources. The proposed program must also include elements necessary for the administration of the program.

The proposed program must be designed to have a neutral impact on crab harvests off the coasts of Oregon and California. The proposed program must assume that participation by license holders would be voluntary. DFW must consult with license holders when designing the proposed program, and may contract for assistance in developing the proposed program.

DFW must provide a report to the Legislature detailing the proposed program by December 1, 2007. The proposed program may not be implemented, and state funds may not be expended, without specific legislative authorization.

**Votes on Final Passage:**

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|--------|----|---|--------------------|
| Senate | 47 | 0 |                    |
| House  | 97 | 0 | (House amended)    |
| Senate | 49 | 0 | (Senate concurred) |

**Effective:** July 22, 2007